

For Immediate Release

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HERSETH SANDLIN URGES FLEXIBILITY WITH CROP INSURANCE DEADLINES FOR FALL HARVEST

Washington, DC {October 29, 2009}- This week, Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin sent a letter to Risk Management Agency Administrator William Murphy urging him to work with crop insurance companies to ensure flexibility in granting extensions of fall harvest insurance deadlines for corn and soybean producers. Extremely wet weather conditions throughout 2009 have greatly hampered producers' ability to harvest corn and soybeans in a timely manner.

"I have heard from farmers across South Dakota that this could be one of the longest and most challenging harvests in years," Rep. Herseth Sandlin said. "With so much at stake for our state's farmers and our agricultural economy, it's critical that producers are allowed adequate time to ensure the maximum possible production from their farms."

Herseth Sandlin's letter requests Murphy work with insurance companies to ensure that producers are not unfairly penalized for their long harvest due to weather conditions beyond their control and receive ample notification regarding insurance deadlines.

The full text of the letter to Administrator Murphy can be found below.

Mr. William Murphy, Administrator
Risk Management Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250-0801

Dear Mr. Murphy,

I'm writing to urge the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to be as flexible as possible with authorizing additional time to harvest past the end of the insurance period, and to work on an expedited basis with crop insurance companies to ensure flexibility in granting extensions of insurance deadlines for producers.

As you know, extreme wet weather conditions in South Dakota and across much of the Midwest this spring and summer, combined with a cool fall, have greatly hampered producers' ability to harvest corn and soybeans in a timely manner. The USDA National Agriculture Statistic Survey (NASS) Crop Progress report released last week shows that the national corn and soybean harvest is well behind schedule, with only 17 percent of corn and 30 percent of soybeans harvested. In South Dakota, the situation is worse, with only 6 percent of corn harvested for grain to date. I've heard from farmers in South Dakota who believe this could be one of the longest and most challenging harvests in years.

With estimates projecting a record corn and soybean harvest this year, I believe it is important that producers are allowed adequate time to ensure the maximum possible production from their farms. Given that most of the delay in harvest is likely due to insured perils, I strongly urge the RMA to be as flexible as possible with authorizing additional time to harvest past the end of the insurance period.

Further, I encourage you to work closely with the crop insurance companies to ensure fair notification to producers regarding crop insurance deadlines, obligations, and options. This essential communication, along with flexibility regarding the end of insurance period, will be instrumental in making sure producers are not unfairly penalized for a long harvest attributable to natural weather conditions outside their control.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of producers, and I look forward to hearing from you. If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Martin on my staff at 202-225-2801.

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